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SUBJECT: U/S BROWN'S MEETING WITH FINLAND'S INTERIOR MINISTER

Classified By: POLOFF DAVID ALLEN SCHLAEFER FOR REASON 1.4 (B) and (D)

1. (C) Summary: U.S. Under Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Brown and U.S. Ambassador to Finland Earle I. Mack met with Finland's Interior Minister, Kari Rajamaki, on April 26 in Helsinki. Rajamaki told them that Finland was just beginning its preparations for its fall 2006 EU Presidency; during the Presidency, Finland would concentrate on external and internal security issues in the context of EU enlargement. Rajamaki said that Finland's chief security concerns were transnational threats stemming from the country's long border with Russia. He said that Finland was particularly interested in playing an active role in the creation of an EU Border Control Agency, and that he was interested in learning from the U.S. experience of consolidating many agencies into the Department of Homeland Security. Under Secretary Brown said that the U.S. remained very interested in Finland's dialogue with Russia on security issues. He said that hoped the strong Finnish-U.S. bilateral relationship could be used to increase information exchanges in homeland security issues as well as strengthen trans-Atlantic ties during Finland's EU Presidency. Ambassador Mack thanked Rajamaki for his assistance with the Embassy's security and for his role in the creation of Finland's new national action plan to combat trafficking-in-persons. Finally, Rajamaki expressed interest in visiting the U.S. in the fall, and Under Secretary Brown and Ambassador Mack agreed that a visit would be useful in anticipation of Finland's upcoming EU Presidency. End Summary.

2. (C) Under Secretary Brown, in Finland for the GOF-hosted plenary session of NATO's Senior Civil Emergency Preparedness Committee, called on Interior Minister Rajamaki at the latter's invitation. Minister Rajamaki said that Finland was already preparing for its upcoming fall 2006 EU Presidency. He said that the primary security issue for the EU's future concerned the enlargement question. Future enlargement plans should increase the EU's external security, but in a manner that does not diminish homeland security and recognizes the unique nature of transnational threats such as terrorism, trafficking-in-persons, illegal immigration, and health issues. Rajamaki said that for Finland, the main concern was the 1350 kilometer border with Russia. The Interior Minister said that Finnish-Russian cooperation was good at all levels, but that Finland was always searching for ways to involve Russia in regional and multilateral processes aimed at improving border security, such as the Baltic Sea State Task Force of which Finland is currently President. Rajamaki said that he had visited Moscow in November for extensive consultations with Russian counterparts, and that Finland planned to host a similar round of EU-Russia consultations on security issues during Finland's 2006 EU Presidency.

3. (C) Rajamaki said that trafficking-in-persons (TIP) had become one of Finland's main concerns as regards border security issues. Finland was not the primary route for human trafficking into the Schengen Area, but the problem was increasing. The minister opined that Finns had not taken the issue as seriously in the past as they should have, but that this had changed since the recent release of Finland's new national action plan to combat TIP. Rajamaki referred to a recent case involving a busload of Georgian women attempting to use Finland as a "Schengen gateway" to facilitate labor trafficking or smuggling as an example of the problem Finland faces. He also said that Chinese organized crime syndicates had begun to use Finland as a transit point for trafficking and smuggling to western Europe, the U.S., and Canada. Rajamaki said that Finland was playing a leading role in the formulation of the new EU Border Control Agency, and hoped that a Finn would be selected to lead the new organization. Finally, Rajamaki said that all of these problems highlighted the need for increased cooperation among EU countries and the U.S., and said that he hoped Finland could work closely with the U.S. on Justice and Home Affairs issues during the fall 2006 Presidency and help strengthen trans-Atlantic relations.

4. (C) Secretary Brown said that he appreciated Finland's willingness to proactively approach these issues of shared concern. He said that he hoped Finland's EU Presidency would create opportunities to improve U.S.-EU relations. He also

said that he hoped the strong U.S.-Finnish bilateral relationship could be used to strengthen information exchanges on homeland security issues during the Presidency. Brown said that the ability to respond to civilian emergencies is always a common talking point irrespective of positions on certain other policy issues. He said that the U.S. was very interested in Finland's continued dialogue with Russia. He also said that the U.S. would be pleased to assist with information exchanges about border security issues; the new SMART border initiative along America's Canadian and Mexican borders might suggest some best practices that Finland and the EU could use as the new EU Border Control Agency was developed.

15. (C) Rajamaki said that he had followed the creation of the Homeland Affairs "Super ministry" with great interest. He said although the EU could not hope to create such a ministry, there was a great need for EU nations and institutions involved in homeland affairs to cooperate more effectively. Rajamaki asked Brown if he could share any ideas based on his experience at DHS that might prove useful to the EU as regards institution-building. Secretary Brown replied that the consolidation of 22 different agencies into the DHS was one of the largest "mergers" in American history, and that the challenges were tremendous. He said that it was necessary to strictly prioritize goals through risk analysis and distribute resources accordingly; otherwise, resources would be spread thinly across competing demands of varying importance. Brown told Rajamaki that communication was essential, both within an evolving organization composed of previously distinct entities, as well as externally. Brown also said that lessons could often be broadly applied to different situations; for instance, preparation for terrorist attacks might find useful applications during evacuations following natural disasters.

16. (C) Ambassador Mack thanked Rajamaki for his assistance with the Embassy's security. He also thanked Rajamaki for his strong support for Finland's new national action plan to combat trafficking. The Ambassador said that the plan's focus on victim assistance and victims' rights corresponded to U.S. views about the best way to fight this shared problem, and told Rajamaki that we looked forward to continuing to work with the GoF on this issue in the future. The Ambassador also asked Rajamaki about his interest in visiting the U.S., which the Minister's office had previously indicated was a priority for him. Rajamaki replied that he was indeed interested in an official visit to the U.S. in the fall of this year, perhaps in late September. He said that he wished to do this well in advance of Finland's EU Presidency in order to consult with American counterparts while Finland's agenda was still being formulated. Ambassador Mack and Under Secretary Brown agreed that this could be a useful visit and promised to do whatever they could to assist with the necessary arrangements.

MACK